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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 17 August 1993, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. GANEV (Bulgaria)

- Tribute to the memory of the late King of the Belgians, His Majesty King Baudouin I

- Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly: draft resolution [31] (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE KING OF THE BELGIANS, HIS MAJESTY KING BAUDOUIN I

The PRESIDENT: Before we consider the item on the agenda for this morning, the General Assembly will pay tribute to the memory of the late King of the Belgians, His Majesty King Baudouin I.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I should like to convey heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Belgium and to the bereaved family.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of the late King of the Belgians.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of the States members of the African Group of States, which I am privileged to chair in this month of August, I wish to express to the Government and the people of Belgium our profound sadness and deep sorrow over the untimely death of His Majesty King Baudouin, whose sudden death was announced two weeks ago.

At 62, the late King had many more years of service to give to the people of Belgium and, indeed, to the whole world. He will be deeply missed, not only by the people of Belgium, whom he loved and served so well, but also by many people around the world who had come to know, respect and admire the late King. In my own country, Tanzania, which was privileged to receive him and Queen Fabiola in a State visit during his reign, he was deeply respected and admired. His reign saw the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries and, indeed, between the peoples of Belgium and Africa,

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

strengthened and deepened. The period also saw Belgium use its considerable influence in Africa to support and encourage regional cooperation through the establishment and strengthening of regional transport and communication links. No doubt the close links between Africa and the European Community can be attributed to the support of Belgium during the reign of King Baudouin.

But the late King's 40-year reign will probably be remembered most as the period during which Belgians were finally able to settle their long-running constitutional problem. Although in the nature of things the credit for this outstanding achievement has gone to the political authorities involved in the 30-year negotiations, there is no doubt that they could not have succeeded without the support of the King's considerable authority and prestige. Furthermore, in order to succeed, the negotiations needed an atmosphere of peace, tranquillity and stability, which the Belgian monarchy has come to symbolize.

We join the people and the Government of Belgium and the bereaved family in mourning the passing away of a great leader, a great monarch who made an invaluable contribution to human understanding and cooperation. We extend to them, and especially to Her Majesty Queen Fabiola, our deep sympathy and sincere condolences.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Fiji, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Asian Group and of associating the Group with the tribute you, Mr. President, have paid to the late King Baudouin of the Kingdom of Belgium. The late King's contribution to the stability and development of Belgium, its former territory and Europe is widely recognized and much appreciated. He will be sadly missed, not only by the people of Belgium, but also by the international community.

On behalf of the Asian Group, I wish to express our sincere sympathies and condolences to the royal family, the Government and the peoples of Belgium on their loss.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the Republic of Moldova, who will speak on behalf of the States Members of the Eastern European Group.

Mr. SNEGUR (Republic of Moldova): I am speaking on behalf of the 19 Permanent Missions of the States members of the Eastern European Group. We were very sad to learn two weeks ago of the sudden passing of His Majesty King Baudouin I, King of the Belgians.

We in Eastern Europe highly appreciated the tireless efforts of His Majesty to create favourable conditions for the harmonious development of the multinational, multicultural, multilingual Belgian society. It is our deep belief that the political and spiritual legacy of King Baudouin I will be of great importance for the Belgians, the Europeans and all the peoples of the world in their everlasting struggle to create decent living conditions for all human beings.

I wish to express sincere condolences to the people and Government of Belgium and heartfelt sympathy to Queen Fabiola and to all members of the bereaved royal family.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Colombia, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, it is my honour to pay tribute to the memory of His Majesty King Baudouin I.

We remember His Majesty King Baudouin I as an example of tolerance and determination that exalted the spirit of a nation which is a model of unity and solidarity.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

His visits to the main centres of our Organization bring to mind memories of his cosmopolitan and conciliatory nature, demonstrated during the crises that he resolutely faced during his public life.

Thanks to his broad knowledge of the ways of the world, his experience of the world and his ability to anticipate the dilemmas of a changing environment, he was able tc exercise wise and prudent mediation at a time when his country faced the new realities of political transition so critical to its historical development.

His interest in science and technology, in the socio-economic development of nations and in global issues and problems, particularly those related to the environment and relations among nations, reflected his constant, constructive commitment to the common good of mankind.

His sense of duty, his human qualities, his contact with his people, his respect for his ancestors and fellow citizens, his discretion, his determination and unity of purpose all won him the highest esteem not only of his nation but also of the international community at large.

Today we wish to call special attention to those human qualities, that excellence, the work he did at the head of a nation which, like many others, has experienced the dilemmas of cultural richness and diversity and the challenges of maintaining national unity.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group joins the rest of the international community in this well-deserved tribute to the memory of His Majesty King Baudouin I. His life was a model of prudence, discretion and respect, qualities essential and critical to the success of friendly relations among the peoples of the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Malta, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. FSADNI (Malta): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States. It is with deep sorrow that I wish to pay tribute to the memory of King Baudouin I, King of the Belgians, who passed away on 31 July.

In his long reign of over 42 years King Baudouin I established strong relationships with various Heads of State and enjoyed widespread respect in the international community. The large participation of foreign monarchs, presidents and other dignitaries at King Baudouin's funeral earlier this month is the most recent manifestation of this profound respect. In this forum I shall limit myself to recalling the significant presence of King Baudouin at United Nations Headquarters for the World Summit for Children, held in September 1990.

I should like to conclude by expressing my Group's sincere and heartfelt condolences to and feelings of sympathy for the Government and people of Belgium, and the bereaved family of the late King Baudouin I.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. HICKS (United States of America): On behalf of the host country, I wish to say that, along with the world community, the United States mourns the passing of its good friend and close ally King Baudouin I.

The King was a man of great humanity and unswerving principle, dedicated to the causes of unity and tolerance. As he was loved by his people, he will be missed by all of us. May I extend our sincere condolences to his family and the people of Belgium.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Belgium.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) (interpretation from French): I wish to thank you, Sir, and other representatives very sincerely, for the tributes that have just been paid to the memory of His Majesty King Baudouin.

During the 40-odd years of his reign King Baudouin I followed Belgium's foreign relations very closely. Through the many official visits he paid and received he acquired a vast and deep knowledge of international problems. His interest in our Organization, which he had recently visited during the World Summit for Children, and his personal relationship with the Secretary-General made him very much aware of the role of the United Nations in the world. That is why the passing of His Majesty King Baudouin I is a sad loss, not only for all Belgians, but also for the entire international community. The tribute that you have paid him is additional proof of this, and I thank you for it.

AGENDA ITEM 31 (continued)

REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/47/L.64)

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution circulated in document A/47/L.64. The draft resolution is a consensus text. It is the result of extensive informal consultations, which began eight months ago. An important result of these consultations was the formation of an open-ended working group on agenda item 31, under the chairmanship of Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, and Mr. Karukubiro Kamunanwire, Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations. The result of the group's intensive work during this time period is the draft resolution before us.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/47/L.64?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 47/233).

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Fiji for an explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. I remind him that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Asian Group in explanation of vote on the resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Before doing so, I would like to congratulate and thank you, Mr. President, for your initiative in undertaking to rationalize the work of the General Assembly so that it better harmonizes with its mandate as envisaged by the Charter.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Stanley Kalpagé of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Karukubiro Kamunanwire of Uganda for their tireless efforts and patience in co-chairing the open-ended ad hoc committee.

The first step in the revitalization, as stated in the resolution, is the reduction of the number of the Main Committees of the General Assembly from seven to six, so as better to reflect the changes that have occurred in international relations.

While agreeing with the reduction, the Asian Group is not happy with the interim solution, because the allocation is not equitable. This year, the Asian Group is losing a second chairmanship, and overall it is sacrificing a lot in order to go along with the consensus.

The Asian Group, however, has decided to support the resolution because of the understanding that this interim arrangement should in no way be construed as a legal basis for future decisions, that the interim solution is

(Mr. Seniloli, Fiji)

applicable only to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and that an ongoing process will be pursued during the forty-eighth session to reach a final solution.

The PRESIDENT: Allow me to emphasize the importance of the resolution that has just been adopted.

During the consultations the decisive factor was the desire of all Member States to make a significant contribution to the efforts to revitalize the General Assembly. I would like to stress the contribution of the co-chairmen of the open-ended working group on this item - Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka and Mr. Karukubiro Kamunanwire, Permanent Representative of Uganda. I would also like to thank all Member States for their constructive efforts, which have culminated here today. The resolution is an essential foundation for further action regarding revitalization of the General Assembly by Member States.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 31?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.